# THE

# AERONAUT.

No. 107. Sep. 18. 1817

*Omnibus hoc vitium est.* Hor.

*Such vices are universal.*

In the pursuit of happiness, and in the enjoyment of the good things of this world, we may draw a practical boundary line, between the minutiæ and the grand objects of attainment, as they are sought for by those who are running the course of ambition. In the

scale of mind, some capacities are organized to produce perfection by their attention to particulars. They are exact in detail but always inadequate to produce a whole. This is remarked by Horace in his art of Poetry- "Denibus circa lusum ki" On the contrary, those men who are able to produce the grand and wonderful in the history of literature are redundant in blemishes and faulty in particulars- and as the illegimate are said to be able to contemplate the sun, and discern his spots, the misbegotten critic finds food for his puny drivelling, in those eras of the mighty masters, whose blaze has enlightened and dazzled generations.

There is an original adaptation of the faculties, either to what is minute or what is comprehensive - but the consequence of long devotion to littleness is ever a littleness incurable in our nature - and as the contrary, he who worships at the shrine of greatness walks among the children of this world with a derelict vision. He stumbles in his

road, and is the object of admiration to some, but of derision to the many.

We have seen poems produced by rule-makers; but in truth they smelt of the waxed end." Whoever produced any thing worthy of posterity from his own head, when attention had been occupied for years with the head of a pin?

The mind deceives itself in contemplating units, in the ascending, as well as the descending scale. In the former, Mr Locke has expended many pages, in shewing how inadequate and false all our ideas of infinity must be, when we attempt the subject with numbers for our guides. We may add millions to millions, for our own amusement; but we still remain on terra firma, "poor pensioners on the bounty of an hour," in thought, as well as in body. On the other hand, by thinking too little of a unit, the prodigal is reduced to farthing association. We have read a good story,

made for the instruction of children, (but no less beneficial on that account as a parable) of a man who drank up a thousand pounds in sixpenny libations.

To mark the distinction, proposed in our first sentence, in the conduct of man in the affairs of life, is an easy and not a useless task. Whatever he makes his summum bonum, whether he seeks it in fields or in cabinets for honor and wealth, or, through the attainment of wealth for honor and pomp. The same observation holds good.

We call him a miser, who is particular about trifles. From our inherent contempt of littleness, we brand the personification of those ideas which are designated by that title, with an appellation carrying obloquy. But if we regard the derivation of the term, is not he as great a wretch, who grasping

by desperate struggles at immense wealth only neglects the minutiæ, not because he does not love money, but because he loves it with a maddened passion — as the man who weighs his scruples and his drams? The coup of the former is more brilliant — does it follow that he has more innate generosity? O selfishness! selfishness! little as the nut in which Homer was enshrined, our greatness lies darkling within thee.

The miser is disgusting in detail, but he is easily duped by the wholesale. John Elwes in his last sickness warmed his trout with his own natural heat, to save the expense of a fire; while in the vigour of his powers and his desires, an idle story bubbled him out of thousands.

— ὡς ἀνθρώπων πέφυκε —

such is the nature of man!

On the other hand, the speculator is seen, grasping at the wealth of "Ormus and the Ind," while this substratum is slop-

: dwig away, grain by grain, until he falls from his giddy eminence, and the bubble of his hopes explodes in air.

What are the rerum novarum cupidi, reformers, revolutionists &c.? Are they not the most covetous, the most dangerous of misers? Their character is well drawn by Sallust, "appetens alieni, sui profusus". They follow their mad career, prodigal of whatever their rapine may collect, because the eternal something is still defending them from afar. They scatter the glittering piles around them, in order to collect them in a more magnificent pyramid. Stone by stone, they level it thus, mocked by the pride of an imaginary Cancatus. They fall, and history records them among her meteor great ones.

Contemplate another contrast. A scullion and boot-cleaner hoards his earnings. He gets into the good graces of the cook and butler; becomes the depositary of their pilferings; mounts by successive grades to higher offices; runs away with his master's daughter; is acknowledged by the family; engages in extensive

ine traffic; and his descendants look down with contempt upon the children of those whose shoestrings their ancestor was honoured by tying -

On the other hand, the nobly born statesman endeavours to become regulator of the affairs of nations. His private affairs are disordered; his underlings riot on his spoils; "defaulter of unaccounted millions," an intriguing mistress and an overdropping chambermaid ruin him. "And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer, never to rise again."

The Conqueror learns to consider a human being as a machine composed of levers and wheels. The loss of a man he regards as an occurrence of no more moment, than the falling of a sparrow or the dropping of a leaf. But could Cæsar when he first put on the toga virilis, have beheld the pale ghosts of the three millions of victims, offered up in his career of fury, he would never have been the conqueror of Gaul, he would never have enjoyed

the Rubicon, he would never have fallen in the Capitol: and the world would have been spared the glory of another hero.

Such are different shades of the universal picture. It is true, there have been men, who boasted themselves superior to the influence of ambition, the love of fame, or the passion for wealth—

* "—cuncta cupit Croesus, Diogenes nihilum.
"Sparsit Aristippus medis in Syrtibus aurum.
"Aurea non satis est Lydia terra Midae."

In plenty Croesus sighs for more,
The Cynic, owning nothing, nothing sought.
In desarts Aristippus shews the bee,
While golden Lydia Midas sated not.

But these anomalous philosophers were not free from the love of Fame. Let Aristippus have wandered in the desart by himself, let him have scattered his obols, if he pleased, for his own amusement, without notice and without ad-

* Auson. Edyl. III.

universe - and he would soon have been tired of the sport. Diogenes found himself invested with an imaginary greatness in [illegible]making a monarch feel his inferiority; but he would soon have been tired of his tub, if he had had no other companions, and been placed in profoundest solitudes.

Such being the case, how can one man in conscience undertake to reform his fellows? What are the critics, essayists, and all other professed censores morum? Or how shall any individual have the impudence to censure his neighbor for a fault, which must have its parallel or its other extreme, in the conduct of his own life?

We may imagine many pleasant dialogues, constructed on the basis of our theme; the interlocutors in which would be in the relative situations of the pot and kettle in the fable. Thus, suppose a

plodding pedant; who has accumulated an immense heap of the stores of antiquity, which evaporates in disquisitions on particles and prefixes, falling foul of a miser, who being possessed of millions, has been buying cowheels for his dinner. Both of these individuals are mere supernumeraries in society; neither of them circulate what they collect; the pleasure of both is derived from associations which are never realized and capabilities which are never exercised.

Parallels of this nature may be constructed ad infinitum. But hear the conclusion of the whole matter; since all men are alike deficient, they need a revelation to direct them; they must have an order among them, privileged to speak without being contradicted, and to censure without being retorted upon. There must be a lie-

. rarchy to correct the principles, or there would be little use of a judiciary which could not maintain itself for a week.

S.

# NOTICE.

☞ It is with much satisfaction that we announce to the public that the twenty two sons of the late Mr Texas have all been shaved by an eminent barber of this city.

††† It is with much regret that we have also to communicate, that Tim: Blunderbuss Esq; was reported defunct by a mistake, and was only in a swoon or trance; from which he has recovered to the great joy of his creditors and great mortification of his grandfather's ghost.